Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of assessing information technology ("IT") products for their target market, comprising:

determining a plurality of criteria that are important to a target market, and at least one attribute to be used for measuring each of the criteria;

specifying objective measurements for each of the attributes; and

conducting an evaluation of an IT product, further comprising[[ ]]:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to the specified objective measurements;

programmatically computing a product ~~generating an~~ assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values;

for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a threshold value, programmatically computing a product assessment score increase that will result by raising that assigned attribute value to the threshold value, the programmatically computing a product assessment score increase comprising recomputing the product assessment score for the IT product using the threshold value as a replacement for the assigned attribute value of the selected attribute; and

programmatically generating a list of recommended actions, the list having an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below [[a]] the threshold value, each of the entries providing at least one suggestion for improving the assigned

attribute value and a specification of ~~how much~~ the programmatically-computed product assessment score increase for that selected attribute. ~~would be increased if the assigned attribute value was raised to the threshold.~~

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising:

prioritizing each of the attributes in view of its importance to the target market;

assigning weights to the attributes according to the prioritizations; and

using the weights when ~~generating~~ programmatically computing the product assessment score.

Claim 4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the conducting an evaluation is repeated at a plurality of plan checkpoints used in developing the IT product.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 5, wherein successful completion of each of the plan checkpoints requires the product assessment score to exceed a predetermined ~~threshold~~ minimum product assessment score.

Claim 7 (original): The method according to Claim 1, wherein a product team developing the IT

product provides input for the evaluation by answering questions on a questionnaire that reflects the attributes.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the assigned attribute values, the product assessment score, and the list of recommended actions are recorded in a workbook.

Claim 9 (original): The method according to Claim 8, wherein the workbook is an electronic workbook.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, wherein a product team developing the IT product provides input for the evaluation by answering questions on a questionnaire that reflects the attributes, and wherein the answers to the questions, the assigned attribute values, the product assessment score, and the list of recommended actions are recorded in an electronic workbook.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising providing the assigned attribute values, the product assessment score, the list of ~~recommended actions~~ suggestions for improving the assigned attribute values, and the specifications of the programmatically-computed product assessment score increases ~~specification of how much the assessment score would be increased~~ to a product team developing the IT product.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 8, further comprising providing the assessment workbook, following the evaluation, to a product development team which is developing the IT product.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising assigning a special designation to the IT product if and only if the assessment score exceeds a predefined ~~threshold~~ minimum product assessment score.

Claim 14 (currently amended): A method of assessing an information technology ("IT") product, comprising:

determining a plurality of criteria for measuring an IT product, and at least one attribute that may be used for measuring each of the criteria;

specifying objective measurements for each of the attributes; and

conducting an evaluation of the IT product, further comprising[[ ]]:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to the specified objective measurements; and

programmatically computing a product ~~generating an~~ assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values, and for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a predetermined threshold value, programmatically computing a product assessment score increase that will result by raising that assigned attribute value to the

predetermined threshold value, the programmatically computing a product assessment score increase comprising recomputing the product assessment score for the IT product using the predetermined threshold value as a replacement for the assigned attribute value of the selected attribute. ~~a specification of how much the assessment score would be increased if the assigned attribute value was raised to the threshold.~~

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 14, wherein the conducting the evaluation further comprises generating a list of recommended actions for improving the IT product.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 15, wherein the list has an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below the predetermined threshold value.

Claim 17 (original): The method according to Claim 16, wherein each of the entries provides at least one suggestion for improving the assigned attribute value.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 14, wherein the specified objective measurements further comprise textual descriptions to be used in the assigning attribute values.

Claim 19 (original): The method according to Claim 18, wherein the textual descriptions identify

guidelines for assigning the attribute values using a multi-point scale.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 14, further comprising using the programmatically-computed product ~~generated~~ assessment score to determine whether the IT product may exit a plan checkpoint.

Claim 21 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 14, further comprising using the programmatically-computed product ~~generated~~ assessment score to determine whether the IT product receives a special designation indicating its support of the measurement criteria.

Claims 22 - 23 (canceled)

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method of assessing information technology ("IT") products for their target market, comprising:

conducting an evaluation of an IT product, further comprising:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of a plurality of attributes, wherein the attributes are defined to measure a plurality of criteria that are important to the target market; and

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to objective measurements which have been specified for each of the attributes;

recording results of conducting the evaluation; [[and]]

using the recorded results to ~~generate an~~ programmatically compute a product assessment

score for the IT product from the assigned attribute values, wherein the ~~generated~~ programmatically-computed product assessment score thereby indicates how well the product meets the criteria that are important to the target market[[,]]; and

for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a predetermined threshold value, using the recorded results to programmatically compute a product assessment score increase that will result by raising that assigned attribute value to the threshold value, the programmatically computing a product assessment score increase comprising recomputing the product assessment score for the IT product using the threshold value as a replacement for the assigned attribute value of the selected attribute. ~~a specification of how much the assessment score would be increased if the assigned attribute value was raised to the threshold.~~

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 24, further comprising charging a fee for carrying out one or more of the conducting, recording, and using.

Claim 26 (new): A system for assessing an information technology ("IT") product for its target market, the system comprising a computer and instructions which are executable, using a processor of the computer, to perform:

determining a plurality of criteria that are important to a target market, and at least one attribute to be used for measuring each of the criteria;

specifying objective measurements for each of the attributes; and

conducting an evaluation of an IT product, further comprising:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to the specified objective measurements;

programmatically computing a product assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values;

for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a threshold value, programmatically computing a product assessment score increase that will result by raising that assigned attribute value to the threshold value, the programmatically computing a product assessment score increase comprising recomputing the product assessment score for the IT product using the threshold value as a replacement for the assigned attribute value of the selected attribute; and

programmatically generating a list of recommended actions, the list having an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below the threshold value, each of the entries providing at least one suggestion for improving the assigned attribute value and a specification of the programmatically-computed product assessment score increase for that selected attribute.

Claim 27 (new): A computer program product for assessing an information technology ("IT") product for its target market, the computer program product embodied on at least one computer-usable storage medium and comprising computer-usable program code for:

determining a plurality of criteria that are important to a target market, and at least one

attribute to be used for measuring each of the criteria;

specifying objective measurements for each of the attributes; and

conducting an evaluation of an IT product, further comprising:

inspecting a representation of the IT product, with reference to selected ones of the attributes;

assigning attribute values to the selected attributes, according to how the IT product compares to the specified objective measurements;

programmatically computing a product assessment score, for the IT product, from the assigned attribute values;

for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below a threshold value, programmatically computing a product assessment score increase that will result by raising that assigned attribute value to the threshold value, the programmatically computing a product assessment score increase comprising recomputing the product assessment score for the IT product using the threshold value as a replacement for the assigned attribute value of the selected attribute; and

programmatically generating a list of recommended actions, the list having an entry for each of the selected attributes for which the assigned attribute value falls below the threshold value, each of the entries providing at least one suggestion for improving the assigned attribute value and a specification of the programmatically-computed product assessment score increase for that selected attribute.